

From the Upper Chamber



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Report for Tuesday, March 14, 2006

The thirty-first day of the 2006 legislative session was called to order by Lieutenant Governor **Mark Taylor**.

Senator **Don Balfour** of the 9th stated that the journal had been read and was found to be correct.

Lt. Gov. **Taylor** stated the first order of business for today was the motion to reconsider Senate Bill 602, which concerns the privatization of one or more state facilities for the treatment of mental illness.

Sen. **Johnny Grant** of the 25th took the well to speak against SB 602, asking the Senate to reconsider yesterday's actions on the bill.

Sen. **George Hooks** of the 14th took the well to speak to the debate on SB 602. He stated the Senate should vote for the motion to reconsider out of respect for Sen. **Grant's** request.

Sen. **Preston Smith** of the 52nd took the well to speak against the motion to reconsider, stating the move would kill SB 602.

The motion to reconsider SB 602 was approved by a vote of 37 to 17. Therefore, the legislation was moved to the foot of today's calendar.

The next order of business was the motion to reconsider SB 422, which expands the scope of practice for chiropractors in Georgia.

Sen. **Don Thomas** of the 54th took the well to speak in favor of the motion to reconsider, saying SB 422 will increase health care costs in the State.

Sen. **Steve Henson** of the 41st made a parliamentary inquiry as to the status of SB 422 in relation to the Senate rules on crossover day, and the potential of the legislation passing this year.

Sen. **Judson Hill** of the 32nd took the well to speak to the debate on SB 422, and the conduct of certain lobbyists regarding the issue.

Sen. **Renee Unterman** of the 45th took the well to speak against the motion, stating that yesterday's vote on the legislation should stand.

The motion to reconsider SB 422 failed by a vote of 23 to 31.

Sen. **Seth Harp** of the 29th took the well to recognize representatives of the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce, who were present in the Senate gallery.

The Secretary read SR 1156, which recognizes The Links, Inc. for their diligent work in assisting communities. Senators **Ed Tarver** of the 22nd, **Steen Miles** of the 43rd and several others took the rostrum to introduce representatives of the group, and to recognize Links Day at the Capitol.

SB 665-679; Senate Resolutions 1170, 1176, 1183, 1185; House Bills 111, 304, 338, 379, 429, 483, 547, 582, 654, 710, 731, 848, 873, 874, 907, 910, 953, 1008, 1044, 1121, 1160, 1168, 1193, 1195, 1216, 1223, 1227, 1228, 1239, 1244, 1248, 1249, 1259, 1273, 1279, 1282, 1290, 1294, 1302, 1305, 1307, 1318, 1323, 1335, 1359, 1361, 1371, 1372, 1391, 1392, 1403, 1412, 1417, 1423, 1424, 1436, 1451, 1456, 1460, 1473, 1483, 1484, 1490, 1497, 1501, 1502, 1506, 1528, 1542, 1557-1562, 1572-1581; and House Resolutions 30, 1094, 1109, 1299, 1339, 1551, 1661 and 1798 were read for the first time and assigned to their respective Committees.

After the reports of Standing Committees and second reading of Senate Bills and Resolutions, the morning roll call was taken.

Lt. Gov. **Taylor** then recognized Sen. **Joseph Carter** of the 13th, who led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance. Sen. **Carter** then introduced the *Chaplain of the Day*, Reverend **Sam Rogers** of First United Methodist Church of Tifton, who led the Senate in the daily devotional.

Sen. **John Douglas** of the 17th took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to announce that Thursday, March 16, is NASCAR Day at the Capitol.

The Secretary read 664, which expresses the Senate's condolences on the passing of Sergeant **Philip Dodson, Jr.** Sens. **Cecil Staton** of the 18th, **Ronnie Chance** of the 16th and **Douglas** took the rostrum to honor Sgt. **Dodson** for his service to the U.S.

The Secretary read SR 1187, which recognizes today as American Red Cross Day at the Capitol. Sens. **David Shafer** of the 48th and **Thomas** of the 54th took the rostrum to recognize Red Cross representatives for their important community service.

Sen. **Michael Meyer von Bremen** of the 12th took the rostrum to introduce the *Doctor of the Day*, Dr. **Joe Bateman** of Albany.

SR 1143-1169, 1171-1175, 1177-1182 and 1184 and HR 1798 were read and adopted.

The Secretary read SR 796, which commends Dr. **Rich Jadick** for his heroic medical service in the war in Iraq. Sen. **Tarver** and several others took the rostrum to introduce Dr. **Jadick** to the Senate.

The Local Consent Calendar, consisting of SB 658, and HB 1087, 1199, 1327, 1332, 1333 and 1197, passed by a vote of 52 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 400, which provides for a post-retirement benefits increase in the Teachers Retirement System. Sen. **Bill Heath** of the 31st took the well to present the bill, stating the legislation has received unanimous support in the House.

HB 400 passed by a vote of 52 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 1052, which provides for a distinguishable transporter license plate. Sen. **Ross Tolleson** of the 20th took the well to present the bill, saying the plates will recognize auto wholesalers and persons transporting motor vehicles. He yielded to questions from Sen. **John Wiles** of the 37th.

HB 1052 passed by a vote of 51 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 81, which provides a homestead exemption to the unremarried surviving spouses of deceased spouses. President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1st took the well to present the legislation, stating the bill will clear up confusion with the transfer of property titles. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Ralph Hudgens** of the 47th.

The Secretary read Amendment 1, which strikes the word “unremarried” from the bill. Amendment 2 was also read, which defines the conditions of eligibility for the homestead exemption.

Sen. **Emanuel Jones** of the 10th took the well to present Amendment 1.

Sen. **John Wiles** of the 37th took the well to explain Amendment 2.

Sen. **Johnson** took the well to conclude the debate on HB 81. He urged the Senate to vote against Amendment 1 and in favor of Amendment 2.

Amendment 1 failed by a vote of 43 to 6.

Amendment 2 was adopted by a vote of 41 to 0.

Sen. **Unterman** took the well to welcome representatives of the Georgia Federation of Republican Women, who were present in the Senate gallery.

HB 81 passed as amended by a vote of 47 to 0.

The Secretary read SR 1027, which creates the Senate Study Committee on court surcharges and additional fines. Sen. **Wiles** took the well to present the resolution, and to urge its passage.

SR 1027 was adopted by a vote of 46 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 984, which allows five excused absences from school for a student whose parent or legal guardian is in active military service. Sen. **Chance** took the well to explain the Committee Substitute.

The Committee Substitute to HB 984 was adopted by a vote of 37 to 0.

HB 984 passed by substitute by a vote of 49 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 149, which exempts of certain pension or retirement funds or benefits from wage garnishment. Sen. **Shafer** took the well to present the bill, and to urge its passage.

HB 149 passed by a vote of 46 to 0.

The Secretary then read SR 844, which will recognize Bluegrass Music Week in Georgia. Sen. **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** of the 24th took the well to present the resolution.

SR 844 was adopted by a vote of 45 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 644, which changes the provisions concerning allowable service in the Employees' Retirement System. Sen. **Heath** took the well to present the bill, which concerns part-time state employees.

HB 644 passed by a vote of 46 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 660, which provides for creditable service in the Georgia Firefighters' Pension Fund for certain active military duty. Sen. **Heath** took the well to present the bill, which concerns firefighters who leave their positions to enter the U.S. military.

HB 660 passed by a vote of 45 to 0.

The Secretary read HB 1020, which further modifies code section concerning the Employees' Retirement System. Sen. **Heath** took the well to present the bill, stating the legislation will provide uniformity in code sections concerning retirement.

HB 1020 passed by a vote of 47 to 0.

After the announcements, Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19th moved that the Senate stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 15.

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